

## Style in Aesop's Fables

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### Abstract

Style in literature is the manner of writing and expressing thought in language, characteristics of a period, nation or of an individual. Writing style could also be defined the way a writer writes. The technique used by an author consists of syntax, word choice and tone etc. Aesop being a slave was not so learned, the vocabulary used by him is very simple and lucid and easy to understand yet very conceit. The fables are told from the point of omniscient narrator, and show wit and insight of its characters. The animals and inanimate characters have been given voice to show human vanities and follies.

Aesop's Fables are attributed to Greek slave named Aesop lived in 304 B.C.E. The stories of Aesop's are known for its wit, sharpness and full of moral lessons. Aesop was a slave and assumed to be illiterate but intelligent, so the style is very simple and common words has been used, but it contains very deep meaning. Aesop has talked mostly about the tyrants but has talked less about the leaders, being a slave his experiences were related to his masters and tyrants. Aesop's Fables teaches philosophy of life by rendering moral to keep away from the wicked. Aesop's Fables are impregnated with deep and indirect moral of human life. It teaches that words are nothing or don't have any meaning till they are fulfilled by the action. One should not suffer in false hope or to be deluded by a vain hope and reliance upon them. The stories and themes of Aesop's Fables are often funny and easy for children to understand. Some of more well – known morals credited to Aesop's Fables are: 'a double death' in the fable "The Oxen and the Butchers" and; "A bird in the hands is better than two in the bush are some of the examples of morals existing in Aesop's Fables. Aesop's Fable also consists of some stories and fables with Golden rule. "The Old man and his grandson" which is never found in other fables. These golden rules render morals that we need to analyze and imagine our actions being done to us and different generations can respect and learn from each other how to behave properly in order to keep peace, harmony and discipline in family and society. 'The demonstration' of animals symbolizes for slavery in negative way, while it also represents possible side of domesticated animals.

The imaginative literature of Aesop's Fables has been constructed in such a way that listeners or readers are encouraged to look for meaning hidden beneath the literal surface of the fiction. This conceit meaning of the literature corresponds to a new stage in the progress of soul toward a higher level of existence. "The old woman and the Physician" is fable which falls in the category of jokes, using her wit and the old woman told about the robbery done by the doctor in her home while she was in the phase of blindness. "This man here speaks in what he says; for i did promise to give him a sum of money if i should recover my sight" (Townsend, 25). The witty style of Aesop's Fable make readers enjoy to their full heart. The Fables of Aesop enhances on the development of a true leadership quality. Metaphorical language has been also used in Aesop's Fables,; as in the fable "The Tortoise and the Hare" shows the metaphorical use through a classic demonstration of lesson through the comparison of metaphor – a lesson of political proportions, in which the winner is living slow and stable over the fast and impetuous lifestyle of the loser. Apart from it the hare has been also symbolized for youthful virility and physical vitality.

Example: In the fable, "The Belly and The Members" represents the act of unity and maintaining discipline whether in family, in an organization or country. It also symbolizes 'multiplicity of talent'. The metaphorical language adds richness and emphasizes beauty of literature. The stories of Aesop are full of moral values which teach ethics of life, to always follow the path of truth. Aesop's Fable stories consist of proverbs which render short expression of popular wisdom. The fables cover social, religious and political themes. Aesop made use of humble incidents to teach great truths of life and after serving up a story he adds advice to it. Apollonius of Tyana opines about Aesop's style, 'he made use of humble incidents to teach great truths, and after serving up a story he adds to it the advice to do a thing or not to do it'(S. George p1). Aesop told the truth by the facts indirectly without claim to be relating real events, though the stories are based on the events and situation of its contemporary time. Some fables verging on its function, are outright jokes, as in the case of "The Old Woman and the Doctor" aimed at greedy practitioners of medicine. The fable of Aesop's contain short but real narration which convey hidden meaning by the skilful introduction of fictitious characters as its high prerogative and in separable attribute rather than the direct use of language. The great purpose of instruction lying in fables, seek to inculcate some moral, social duty, maxims and political truth. It play the role of ethical guide for human society through the proverb – 'Might makes

right'. It makes us realize the authority and significance of power and powerful in very easy language, that power always rests with powerful only. Sometimes there is repetition of the same moral 'as double death' in the fables – "The Old Lion" and "The Oxen and the Butchers", "The Wolf and the Sheep", "The Wolf and the Lamb" asserts the same moral that 'tyrants need no excuse'.

Aesop's Fables and stories are full of marquis and emphasize leadership quality and good deeds of an individual. (The hunter and the woodman 40). The characters of Aesop's Fables display the character of the people existing in society, for example, the character of the fox displays: disloyalty, cowardice, greed, dishonesty and negative qualities. Through its negative characters Aesop had tried to mirror the evils existing in human society. The themes of Aesop's Fables inform about the ill and right acts of readers today. The author has used personification by giving animal characters a voice. A fox can talk in fable but the real forces existing in society do not talk. The fable contains conceit meaning in them and still relevant in today's scenario because the moral renders us the lessons of life. The fable "The Lion, The Bear and The Fox" consists artistic interpretation and proverbial expression. Aesop was a keen observer of animals and people, his animal characters has been personified in ways of human emotions and speech. The majority of characters possess animalistic qualities. These natural qualities of animals as: hares are quick, tortoises are slow, boastful quality of tiger, wickedness of fox has been used by Aesop to focus on human traits and wisdom. Each fable has an accompanying moral to be learned. Aesop's Fables cover social, political and religious themes. They also functions as ethical guide for the education of children. The ethical dimension of Aesop's Fables is reinforced in the adult world through depiction in illustrative means. Some titles of Aesop's Fables also later become proverbial as: in the case of killing, "The Town mouse and the Country Mouse" and "The Goose that laid the Golden Eggs" are some of the examples of it. The animal characters in the fables are very literal depictions of real people. Aesop created a treasure trove for children and adults to read and draw lessons from the fables. The Fable "The Mercury and the Carpenter" consists of two maxims: The first, 'Honesty is the best policy and the Second, 'God help those who help themselves' this beauty of Aesop's Fables. Though there are some fables which are very short and consists of four to five lines only as: "The Seagull and the Kite", "The Wolf and the Shepherds", etc. The stories of Aesop's Fables render social interpretation that lessons to be learned about proper behaviour towards our superiors and one

should respect the persons with power or the authority of power in order to maintain discipline. It also preaches the moral that how difficult things become easy with practice.

The fables, “The Lion, the Bear, the Fox” and “The Lion, the Fox, and the Ass” are quite same and the meaning moral derived them are near about same. There repetition of the fables and stories of fables containing same moral. “The Old Lion” and “The dogs and the Lion’s skin” are the fables with similar in meaning about the ‘double death’ of a person who faces insult after losing power. Parallel proverbs of similar meaning are also part of Aesop’s Fables as: ‘A tyrant will always find a pretext for his tyranny’. “The Old Lion” the emphasis of power and the pain of losing it have been given through metaphorical description. Some of the Aesop’s Fables function as the source for idioms. For example ‘Kill not the goose lays the golden egg’ or ‘Killing the golden goose’ are the idioms derived from the fable. “The Hen and the Golden Eggs” “The Hen and the Golden Eggs” and “The Woman and Her Hen” possess the same moral of human greed. So, there are many fables in Aesop whose morals are more or less the same moral. The proverb “Necessity is the mother of invention” is a perpetual gift of Aesop’s Fables. It is very much authentic in age of technology. “The Hares and the Lions” is a fable of four lines only but it consists of deep meaning. Aesop’s Fables possess conceit on interpretation to which a person of senses and wisdom is able to explore. “The Hawk and the Nightingale” and “The Wolf and the Lamb” consists the same moral of tyrannical use of power in which sophistry is rejected in the face of hunger. Beautiful, calm landscape is illustrated in the fables; shows the power of beauty and peace of jungles. Aesop’s Fables consist of hidden meaning and that no so much by use of language the messages have been used throughout the time and history. In Aesop’s Fables the animals and objects have been used to tell the story which relay humans the consequences of their actions. ‘In the familiar fable of ‘The Fox and The Grapes’ ,the fox - after vainly exerting all his wiles to get the grapes hanging beyond his reach - concludes that they probably sour anyway: they express moral is that men belittle what they cannot get(glossary of literary terms 6)”. Aesop’s fables render conceit meaning and show its use and significance in human life. The shining piece of morality is recommended in the fable “The Ant and the Dove”, with the example of dove; who voluntarily does office of charity to its fellow creatures without any obligation or expectation. The fables, “The Lion, Jupiter, and the Elephant” and “The Hares and the Frogs” have the same moral as there is always someone worse off than you. In Aesop’s Fables there are many more fables who derive the same moral

though have different stories. The story 'The Old Lion' shows the importance and authority of power in human life and politics through the character of the Lion which says-“ I have reluctantly brooked the insults of the brave, but to be compelled ...a double death”. Here the word 'double death' has been used to show the grave consequence of a person's life without power specifically a politician. A person while losing power not only loses the authority of power but also his dignity and respect. Priya Bajaj supports the dire consequences of powerlessness as, "Politics is concerned with nothing else but the acquisition and retention of power" (Panorama Of Indian Writing p195). The writing style in Aesop's Fables is very simple yet full of meaning and morals. The implicit moral of the fables teach wisdom and truth of human life.

#### Works Cited

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Aesop (tl); Aesop's Fables, Aesopica (yue); Chwedlau Aesop (cy); Ἰῆσώπῃ (en-gb); 𐌶𐌿𐌸𐌰𐌶𐌰𐌿𐌸𐌰 (ar); Fables of Aesop (en); Esops fabler, Aesopica (nb). Aesop's Fables. collection of fables credited to Aesop. Upload media. Wikipedia Wikisource. Aesop in Bayeux.jpg 666 × 791; 80 KB. Marcus Gheeraerts I - The ass eating thistles.jpg 2,880 × 2,404; 1.31 MB. Marcus Gheeraerts I - The fox and the stork.jpg 2,880 × 2,494; 1.27 MB. Famous life lessons from Aesop's fables, including lessons on kindness, courage & perseverance. From generation to generation, Aesop's fables have been read, taught and sung about. At one point or another you would have heard of at least one of Aesop's fables. Some of our favourites include "The boy who cried Wolf", "The Tortoise and the Hare" and "The Lion and the Mouse". For years, children have learned the importance of being kind, selfless and giving. We have rounded up 12 Life Lessons From Aesop's Fables, which we believe are the most important in today's world! Life Lessons From Aesop's Fables: 1. The Tortoise and the Hare: Never Give Up! First on our list of Life Lessons From Aesop's Fables is the one that everyone knows! Aesop's Fables. Server Costs Fundraiser 2021. Please help us pay for the servers and web services required to operate our non-profit organization's website. Clayton, E. "Aesop, Aristotle, and Animals: The Role of Fables in Human Life." Humanitas, Nos. 1 and 2, Vol. APA Style. Horgan, J. (2014, March 08). Aesop's Fables. World History Encyclopedia. Retrieved from <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/664/aesops-fables/>. Chicago Style. Horgan, John. "Aesop's Fables." World History Encyclopedia. Last modified March 08, 2014. <https://www.worldhistory.org/article/664/aesops-fables/>. MLA Style. Horgan, John. "Aesop's Fables." World History Encyclopedia. World History Encyclopedia, 08 Mar 2014. Fables from The Fables of Aesop, and Others, with Designs on Wood by Thomas Bewick are being added. These are a series of fables similar to Croxall's in style and sometimes using the same or similar language. I am also trying an experiment in colorizing the woodcuts to better show the subjects of the fable which can otherwise sometimes get lost in the illustration. Illustrations and some Google-translated text from the 1477 Heinrich Steinhausen's Aesopus collection of the fables are being added to select fables.